



STATE OF IOWA

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IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF FAIR HOUSING STUDY

Des Moines, IA – Passed in 1968, the Federal Fair Housing Act is celebrating its fortieth anniversary. This landmark legislation prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, and national origin in the sale and rental of housing. To measure the level of compliance and understanding of state and federal fair housing laws, the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (the Commission) completed a study of rental housing in the Waterloo area. In the spring of this year, the Commission publicly announced its intent to conduct this study.

During the month of April 2008, the Commission tested twenty (20) randomly-selected housing rental units in Waterloo, Iowa, in order to determine if managers and owners of said units were acting in compliance with State and Federal Fair Housing Laws. The Commission tested to determine whether housing providers treated potential applicants differently because of their familial status (the presence of minor children in their households) by using matched-pair testers. Family status complaints rank below race, disability, sex, and national origin in terms of numbers of complaints annually filed with the Commission.

The Commission believes this study provided both a means to measure the level of compliance and, just as importantly, to help educate professionals in the sale or rental of housing. According to Ralph Rosenberg, Director of the Commission, *"the 40th anniversary provides a good benchmark in time to measure compliance – and educating stakeholders on how to avoid current or future violations – is always timely."* The study is available on the Commission website

Fourteen of the twenty tests showed compliance. Six (6) of the twenty (20) tests indicated evidence of possible discrimination. One (1) indicated possible discrimination based on familial status; one (1) indicated possible discrimination based on familial status and race; and four (4) indicated possible discrimination based on race. Although the tests were solely designed to determine whether familial status would be a factor or consideration in the way particular property owners or managers responded to inquiries regarding their residential rental units, results from four (4) of the tests indicated possible racial steering. The Civil Rights Commission will work to resolve any problems through discussion and consultation with the parties, including through the offer of training.

Any Iowan who believes that they or a family member or acquaintance have witnessed or viewed discriminatory advertisements are urged to contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission for investigation of the advertisement. Landlords are also invited to contact the Commission for training or to answer questions.

Related Links:

Final Report: Familial Status Testing in Waterloo, Iowa:

[http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/docs/FinalReportWaterloo11-12-08\(2\).pdf](http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/docs/FinalReportWaterloo11-12-08(2).pdf)

HUD Fair Housing Information: <http://www.hud.gov/groups/fairhousing.cfm>

Filing Complaints with the ICRC: http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/file_complaint/